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General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee
24th meeting
Thursday, 24 May 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Election of the Chairperson and the Bureau of the First Committee for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly

The Chairperson: This meeting has been convened to elect the Chairperson and the Bureau, consisting of three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, of the First Committee for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, in accordance with rule 99 (a) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to convey to the members of the Bureau at the sixty-first session — the Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Andy Rachmianto of Indonesia, Mr. Boštjan Malovrh of Slovenia and Mr. Federico Perazza of Uruguay, and the Rapporteur, Mr. Abdelhamid Gharbi of Tunisia — our appreciation for their extraordinary performance and assistance in steering the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion.

We shall now proceed with the electoral process, starting with the chairmanship of the First Committee. It is my privilege and honour to nominate the candidate of the Group of African States, Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal, for the post of Chairman of the First Committee for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

Before his current appointment, Mr. Badji was, for two years, Senegal's Ambassador to Germany and Austria, with residence in Bonn, as well as Permanent Representative to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Office at Vienna.

From 1991 to December 2001, he was ambassador and diplomatic adviser to the Prime Minister. Prior to that, he had served as diplomatic adviser to the President since 1988. Between 1985 and 1988, Mr. Badji served as First Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations here in New York. From 1979 to 1985 he was Head of United Nations and International Conferences in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 1977, and his first assignment was Deputy Head of the Department of International Conferences.

A career diplomat, the Senegalese envoy has represented his country at numerous international conferences, meetings and summits during the course of his career, among them more than 20 regular sessions of the General Assembly and its six Main Committees, the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of West African States and other bodies. Since 2004, he has been Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

He holds a master's degree in law and an advanced diploma in international law from the University of Dakar, as well as a diploma from the Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature. In 1987 he was an auditor at The Hague Academy of

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International Law in the Netherlands. Mr. Badji is fluent in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese Creole, Jola, Socé and Wolof. Born on 28 April 1952 in Zinguinchor, Senegal, he is married and has four children.

Given his vast experience and impressive credentials, it is truly an honour for me to submit his candidature to the Committee today.

Since there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and established practice, the First Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal elected Chairman of the First Committee for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Chairperson: I should like now to proceed to the election of three Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur of the First Committee for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

It is my pleasure to put before the Committee the nominations for the posts of Vice-Chairperson of the First Committee: for the Group of Asian States, Mr. Bassam Darwish of the Syrian Arab Republic; for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Mr. Ricardo Morote of Peru; and for the Group of Western European and other States, Mr. Roman Hunger of Switzerland. I am also pleased to inform the Committee that Mr. Dainius Baublys of Lithuania has been nominated by the Group of Eastern European States for the post of Rapporteur.

Bearing in mind that those four candidates for the posts of Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur have been endorsed and nominated by their respective regional groups unanimously, I expect that the Committee would wish to move to elect them by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairperson: Allow me, on behalf of the Committee and on my own account, to express our sincere congratulations to Ambassador Paul Badji on his election as Chairman, to Mr. Bassam Darwish, Mr. Ricardo Morote and Mr. Roman Hunger on their election as Vice-Chairmen, and to Mr. Dainius Baublys on his election as Rapporteur, of the First Committee for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

I am confident that, given their wealth of experience, political acumen and invaluable knowledge, the First Committee will forge ahead in its work during the sixty-second session.

I give the floor to the Chairman of the First Committee for the sixty-second session, Ambassador Paul Badji.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to thank the African Group, which was kind enough to endorse my candidacy. I would also like to thank all delegations in the First Committee for having placed their confidence in my country, Senegal, and in me personally.

I am returning to the First Committee, which in some ways is an old love, as I was a delegate to the Committee some years ago. It is an aristocrat among Committees, for it has enabled the United Nations to take decisions not just on nuclear disarmament, but also on weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, as well as on conventional weapons. It is true that over the past few years it has encountered many problems owing to differences among member States. However, I am confident that at the forthcoming session the Committee will get back on track and continue to make progress on disarmament — progress for which all member States hope. I am sure that we will be able to work with full understanding among member States.

As Chairman, I will be available to all member States so as to assist the First Committee in once again making the kind of progress for which it has always striven.

The Chairperson: I thank Ambassador Badji for his statement.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.